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For Bob Gard —
Whose book will really
cover the subject — and whose
kindness lightened my
"foreign duty."
Herbert Halpert

Tall Tales and Other Yarns from Calgary, Alberta

LIEUTENANT HERBERT HALPERT

WESTERN CANADA was one of the last frontiers in North America. As the open cattle range became crowded and was fenced in, the cowmen slowly drifted their herds north from the southwestern states to Wyoming and Montana. Some of them continued north up the old Fort Benton trail and so across the Canadian border into southern and western Alberta. For similar reasons farmers from Minnesota and other midwestern states unable to find land to their liking also made their way northwest to mix with settlers from eastern Canada as well as with the English and Scottish who had come directly from the old country.

Today this is still a country of rich variety. Cattle and horse ranching, wheat farms, coal mining, all center around the small but very metropolitan city of Calgary. From Calgary in the rolling foothills it is just eighty miles west by rail to Banff and thence to Lake Louise—both world famous resorts in the bare grandeur of the Canadian Rockies which rise sharply west to the Great Divide.

The Canadian Pacific Railroad came through the West in 1885. Tourists have been coming here since that time. Before those days, English "remittance men," usually ne'er-do-well younger sons pensioned off "to leave their country for their country's good," settled around this area. Buffalo, deer, and game birds were plentiful. Once the Indians were dealt with, by comparison with other areas the worst was over, for here the pioneers were favored with winters milder than in the states to the east or immediately to the south.

Around Calgary one finds the reservations of many of the Plains Indian tribes: the Stoneys, Bloods, and Blackfeet. Today, good hunting, a congenial climate, and the casual friendly ease of the West still make living pleasant for the visitor. The famous annual Calgary Stampede, with some nostalgia and a little self-consciously, tries to recapture the "golden days" of this vivid frontier.

How recently this was frontier would be amazing to a Californian but even more so to an Easterner. To be a member of the "Southern Alberta Pioneers and Old-Timers' Association" one has to have been here only before 1890. Farther south the date is a few years earlier. At the Old-Timers' meetings you find the pioneers are still plentiful and sturdy. Of course, when you start to collect pioneer lore, you are told the usual sorrowful tale: you should have

been here ten or twenty years ago when so-and-so was alive. However, the folklorist knows enough to discount this, and informants are not too difficult to find. As a matter of fact some of the best informants are not "pioneers" but people who came shortly after the turn of the century.

An army man devoting a few evenings and Sundays out of his precious little leisure, and with no means to travel around the country, cannot do more than skim the surface.[1] For these reasons too, I made no attempt to collect material from Indians or from non-English-speaking groups. In the seven months in which I was stationed near Calgary and on one or two later visits I secured the bulk of this collection. About a dozen tales came from a Banff guide whom I met during a visit to Lake Louise, and a few come from Granum in the south of the Province and Grande Prairie in the north.

All the stories given here were dictated to me. It should be noted that storytellers in this Province are much more literate than those in many sections of the United States. This literacy sometimes is a handicap to the folklorist for such narrators often become stiffly self-conscious when they are dictating. This accounts somewhat for the uncolloquial, "bookish" quality of language in several of the stories.

Calgary is on a plateau over three thousand feet high and the altitude and dry air have a tingle, a kind of feverish excitement. The atmosphere has a deceptive clarity which makes the mountains look fifty miles closer than they are. In mid-winter the warm chinook winds come over the mountain passes melting the deepest snow and raising the temperature from well below freezing to a spring temperature in an amazingly short time. Sober descriptions of the effects of the "chinook" strike the newcomer as the wildest flights of imagination.[2]

[1] Professor Robert E. Gard has been in Alberta for over a year on a Rockefeller Foundation Grant in charge of a folklore and history project in connection with the Extension Department of the University of Alberta. By extensive publicity and innumerable talks before various organizations he has induced Alberta people to contribute a large amount of material. A few newspaper columnists, like Robert Needham of the *Calgary Herald*, have occasionally published folk tales and other folklore. Some stories have appeared in newspapers in the Province in interviews and as "fillers." Compare the informant's comment on the last tale in this collection.

[2] "... The warmth of the Great Plains at the eastern foot of the Rockies is the result not only of proximity to the ocean, but also of the "chinook" winds. These are dry and warm west winds blowing on the south side of depressions crossing the continent. They are warm and damp after their passage over the Pacific and in crossing the Western ranges lose their humidity as rain, and in favourable circumstances descend to the plains of the interior with föhn heat and dryness due to compression. Their influence is greatest along the east foot of the range, where they rapidly melt and dry up the snow and make grazing possible all winter.... The rise in temperature when the chinook sets in is somewhat exceedingly rapid, as much as 40° in 15 minutes being occasionally recorded. As a rule the temperature does not exceed 40° but this appears very warm after the intense cold which may have prevailed during a preceding spell of anticyclonic weather. Alberta being close under the Rockies is specially favoured by chinooks, and Calgary has recorded 58° in January. When chinooks are strong and frequent the western Prairie Provinces have a comparatively open winter...." W. G. Kendrew, *The Climates of the Continents* (3d ed., New York, 1942), pp. 314–315.

It is the climate, with its sudden extremes of temperature, which forms the theme of many of the tall stories told in the area. Along with them one gets exaggerated hunting and fishing tales, and jests about the tenderfeet, tourists, and Englishmen. Regional pride is high. Calgary laughs at Edmonton to the north, but it joins with the rest of Western Canada in expressing through mockery the widely felt irritation at the eastern provinces.

As might be expected most of the folk tales found were carried in from elsewhere, but the majority of them have been thoroughly changed to fit local conditions. Some new ones have been made on the old models.

We find Paul Bunyan here adapted to a treeless country just as he has been in the southwestern oilfields. There is some possibility that the little we have about him dates from the "pre-literary epoch" of the legend, for it is reported as told in fragments and not in a connected narrative. Since I have only one informant, this cannot be taken as satisfactory evidence. However, other collectors might do well to search further to see if the stories were widely told, and try to date specifically when they became known. How such legends grow is interestingly exemplified by my informant's description of the way he himself incorporated a railroad yarn.

Of much more importance is a newly discovered folk hero, Dave McDougall, son of the famous early missionary, George M. McDougall. Dave has secured an immortality far different from his father's by the outrageous yarns he told about himself. He followed the pattern, common to the many Munchausens in the United States, of adapting and claiming as his own experiences far more yarns than he actually composed. Like John Darling in New York State, he infuriated many serious-minded Alberta citizens by his insistence that he spoke nothing but the truth.[3] Dave, a resident of Calgary in his later years, is reputed to have been a very prolific storyteller, but only a baker's dozen of his stories seem to be current. Among them are some which Dave's wife, an ideal helpmate for a yarn spinner, not only vouched for, but even blew up further. Dave's historically better-known older brother, John, who was both a missionary and an author,[4] was, if tradition may be relied on, an even more outrageous example of the Munchausen breed. Unfortunately, I could get no more than a hint of the kind of stories he told, although many people around Calgary remembered both of the brothers[5] and after some hesitation spoke of them freely.

[3] Cf. H. Halpert, "John Darling, A New York Munchausen," *Journal of American Folklore*, LVII (1944), 98.

[4] For his life see: John Maclean, *McDougall of Alberta: A Life of Rev. John McDougall, D.D., Pathfinder of Empire and Prophet of the Plains* (Toronto, 1927). Rev. McDougall's writings are listed on pp. 265–266.

[5] In a pamphlet by Edna Kells, *Elizabeth McDougall, Pioneer* (Toronto, n.d.) p. 48, we are informed: "Her eldest son, the Rev. Dr. John McDougall, passed on in 1917, and the second son, David McDougall, trader and rancher, died in 1928."

Before presenting the stories some information on when they were told and how they were learned is instructive. I asked Alex R. McTavish, aged fifty-two, whose father was the first blacksmith in Calgary, where he had heard the stories he had told me. Mr. McTavish has put a number of tall stories into verse, originally for the entertainment of his son who was overseas in the RCAF. He has continued his versifying for his own amusement, and several of his pieces have been published in newspapers., He said: "Heard them from here and there and all over. I've always been interested in old-timers, my father's friends—lived with them all my life. My father was a pioneer, and my uncles. It was mostly some particular character that told these stories. He probably invented some of the old-time characters."

"When were they told?" I asked. "Oh, sitting around the house in the evening—at branding time—sometime when people got together. More particularly when some greenhorn or tenderfoot—an eastern visitor, was present. These stories would never be told directly to the greenhorn, but would be told in his presence, and very often verified by one or more bystanders, and sometimes enlarged upon by a suggestion from a friend, or verified as to the exact location. They would tell it as a matter of course—just part of the daily conversation. Not as though it were anything out of the ordinary course of events—just a common bit of gossip. Naturally, if he had any brains at all, he would savvy that they were having fun at his expense."

I met fifty-eight-year-old Andrew Wright, better known as "Scotty," at Lake Louise last summer and got a number of excellent stories from him. He told me: "I come out to Canada 1904, from Scotland, and I come out to the park New Year's Day 1905. I was a ranger in the park 1915–1928. I was guiding for two years, and I've been with the park engineers."

I asked Scotty, who, like most guides, is a fine yarn spinner, how he had learned his stock of tales, and was surprised to find how conscious the process is. Guides realize that storytelling is part of their stock in trade, and go to school in winter by having informal sessions in which they exchange yarns with their colleagues.

"The way I heard most of them stories: different local boys out with parties they each have their own stories. You have to entertain your guests when you're out—sittin' around the campfire nights. We usually have our *own* parties in the wintertime, and we set and tell stories. You've got to memorize them. I lived so much alone it comes easy. That's how it is with tourists. You have to tell them lots of things. Out in the hills when we hear news, we call it 'moccasin telegraph.' Someone come, give you somethin' to think about for a few days."

He remarked of Dave McDougall whom he had known at Banff: "McDougall, he was one of the 'riginal old-timers. When he come to Morley—that's

about thirty miles east of Banff—they come by prairie schooner." And he commented, after relating one of Dave's stories: "They knew he told so many outrageous stories. They just encouraged him."

Alex McTavish gave me further information about the McDougalls. "They lived in Morley. John lived in Calgary. He preached to the Indians in Morley. John was the brother of Dave—he [John] was the missionary. They were among the first white men to come to the western country. Their father, George McDougall, was a missionary in the West too. Came in the '60's, I guess.[6]

"Dave was a trader—he traded with the Indians, and also ran cattle, and he became a very successful business man.[7] Owned an oil well, built buildings—became quite wealthy, although he lost most of it before he died. After he retired he moved to Calgary. I'd met him in Morley when I was a lad. After that he lived on 4th Avenue—back of us.

"They were known as great storytellers—and, of course, John has written several books, about his travels in the West. They were good men—never drank, never smoked, never swore. They just romanced. They were here in this country in the early days and I suppose wanted to impress the people with the things they had done."

Two points that Mr. McTavish stressed were that both McDougalls "told the stories for truth," and that members of the present generation of the family, especially the daughters, get very irate at the stories and deny that they were told. They do not seem to realize that the McDougalls now hold a position in folk legend that no denials will affect.

A very dignified elderly lady, who preferred that I omit her name, confirmed and amplified Mr. McTavish's observations. To identify her stories I have listed her as "Mrs. B. S." She told me with vigorous humor:

"They said the three biggest liars in Alberta were Dave McDougall; John McDougall was the other two.[8] John was the minister. Bob Edwards poked fun at John McDougall for his storytelling in the "Eye Opener," with a pretended speech by John telling of his swimming across the Saskatchwan River with two ancient Indians on his back.[9]

[6] ". . . In 1862 Mr. (George) McDougall and his eldest son, John . . . travelled . . . as far west as the Rockies. . . ." They returned to near Edmonton in 1863. (Kells, *op. cit.*, p. 7). In 1873, ". . . on November first John McDougall, with his wife, his brother David, John's man, named Donald, and some native helpers, left Edmonton for the Bow Valley. . . . The mission was named Morley. . . ." (Maclean, *op. cit.*, p. 82).

[7] Several of my informants suggested that Dave, a good business man, was not above following the standard trade practice of early Indian traders of getting far more than he gave.

[8] This saying is used about two Montana liars in C. M. Russell, *Trails Plowed Under* (Garden City and New York, 1927), p. 191; also reprinted in B. A. Botkin, *A Treasury of American Folklore* (New York, 1944), p. 565.

[9] Maclean, *op. cit.*, soberly gives us some amusing descriptions of McDougall as a storyteller. "His stories about the buffalo sometimes seemed pure flights of the imagination . . ." (p. 122). On a Lake

"Dave used to tell us some whoppers. The family are living and don't believe he told these. I *know!* I've heard him tell them. He died just a few years ago. He was beginning to get a little batty toward the end. He'd come in to see me at Banff, and he'd tell me the same stories over and over again. This was in his later days. He was getting to be an old man. Mrs. McDougall backed him up in everything he told. It's an amazing thing to me how they *believed* these things. He told them so often, I think he believed them.

"On the whole I would agree with Mr. McTavish's viewpoint on these stories, those by McDougall and others.

"Some people called them damn lies, but they weren't really lies because a lie is a falsehood to deceive people. These were more romancing, a form of humor. They were called tall stories. I think they're really part of the humor of the country. Humor is naturally a little rough and uncouth in a new country."

Mr. McTavish gives us a good explanation of how and why these stories change as they are passed on.

"Each man that tells a story adds a bit on his own, or forgets to tell a bit, therefore gives the story a little different twist. Maybe he's of a little different turn of mind from the last fellow that told it to him. If it was told exactly the same way every time, it might not be true; but each man told it as he saw it. If it was a cut-and-dried affair, the story would always be the same—make it less interesting."

Interesting they are! With no further ado, let us turn to the stories themselves.

1. The Lesson

Told by Alex R. McTavish

Here's a story Dave told me one day over the back fence. Well the Indians were great fellows to race in the old days. They came along with their carts and their ponies, and Dave was coming with his carts—he was coming out for supplies—and met the Indians, and nothing would do but they'd stop and race. Dave didn't have much use for racing; it was a frivolous sport. But he said, "All right, I'll race you." He said to himself, "I'll teach these Indians a lesson." He had a fast horse that was hitched to one of these carts, and he went and got this fast horse out, and then he bet all his outfit, his string of carts and horses against the Indians' outfit, that he could beat their fastest horse. So he raced them and he beat them and won their whole outfits—then gave it all back to the squaws so the squaws wouldn't be stripped of their trappings. He'd taught them a lesson.

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steamer he and another missionary sang a hymn in Cree to entertain the passengers, and McDougall reports "and then they asked for a wild west story and I gave them one" (p. 180). And his final summary is: "McDougall was a splendid story teller. We have sat around the camp-fire, heedless of the intense cold, listening spellbound to thrilling tales of adventure, surpassing any of the experiences narrated in his published letters and books" (p. 262).

2. The Section House

Told by Andrew Wright

Someone wanted to call him about his ignorance. He had made his first trip to New York, him and his wife. The way local people in this vicinity would explain that, they knew this McDougall—you would almost say they hated to meet him—they knew he'd peddle a lot of lies about a place like New York. So when he started off on one of his big stories about the city, one gentleman in the party said, "When you got to the city of New York and got off at the station, I understand you inquired where the section house was!"

—That's just the natural thing in the prairie where they don't have a station. They have a section foreman that gives you information.

3a. Long Trip

Told by Mrs. B. S.

One day he came in: "My, Mrs. S., I used to have a grand team o' horses!" He says, "One time I drove them a hundred miles a day for a hundred days." I said, "My goodness, Mr. McDougall, where were you going?"

3b. Long Trip

Told by Andrew Wright

About this McDougall. That one comin' from the Calgary Stampede was in the smokin' car—1912 Stampede. A bunch of the boys was talkin' about the different ridin' events. This McDougall said, "Them boys can't ride like I used to ride in the old days." Well, he said, "When I was a young boy on the prairie, I used to ride fifty miles a day, day in and day out, week in and week out." Someone asked, "Well, where the hell was you goin'?"

4. Good Climbing

Told by Mrs. B. S.

One day the boys came in tired after climbing Sulphur Mountain. And Dave said they weren't very good stuff. "When I was a young lad I'd run up Stoney Squaw in the morning for exercise, and climb up Rundle in the afternoon."

5. Many Buffalo

Told by Mrs. B. S.

He told me when he came to this country, the prairie was filled with buffalo. You could get out and walk for miles on the buffalo. You had to get out and pull the buffalo calves from between the spokes of the wheels to drive.[10]

6. Buffalo Movers

Told by Andrew Wright

Well, he said, "When I was livin' with my wife in my young married days, years ago, when there was lots of buffalo on the prairie, we lived in a nice log cabin with spring water just outside the door. My wife asked me to get a pail of water. When I went outside and looked around, I found the cabin was half a mile from the water. It seemed that the buffalo rubbin' theirself on the corner of the building through the night had moved the cabin half a mile from the water hole."

[10] Cf. Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 193, and reprinted in Botkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 565–566.

7A. One More

Told by Alex R. McTavish

Dave was getting food for the family and naturally in the Western country there's always a shortage of ammunition. He was down pretty near to his last shell, and so he lay on the edge of the lake and waited till he got the geese in line. He got about a dozen in line and let drive. He was telling this story to his friends in the dining room and his wife was in the kitchen. He said, "I got fourteen with one shot." And his wife called from the kitchen, "Fifteen, Dave, fifteen! Don't you remember we found one in the grass the next morning?"

7B. Two More

Told by Andrew Wright

There was a party come to his house that was goin' on a duck hunt. He said, "I remember one time my wife and I went on a duck hunt." He said, "We got 'round to this lake in the evening. My wife drew my attention to a flock of ducks that were comin' into the lake." He said, "I had a long-range shotgun and I waited till I got a large number of them in line. After shooting I went out to pick up the dead ducks. To my surprise I'd killed twenty ducks." Then his wife said: "You're makin' a mistake, Dave! There was twenty-two ducks!"

—She was as big a liar as he was. They was funny people.

8. Remarkable Catch

Told by Mrs. B. S.

Dave was sitting here, and he says, "You go up to Gull Lake?" I says, "Yes." He says, "Lots of big fish in that lake. Get any whitefish?" I said, "No, just pike left." Then he said, "I was going up to Edmonton one night and I had to camp overnight at Gull Lake. I went out to throw in my line. First thing I knew I had a fish—jack fish." He says, "I pulled it in and it weighed forty-seven pounds. And when we cut it open, there were six whitefish in it. They weighed seven pounds each. When we ate them—the whitefish—they were just like they'd come out of fresh water."

—He was telling me the truth—he believed it.

9. Fooling the Fish

Told by Andrew Wright

He told this, must be twenty-five years ago, in Banff. He said, "While traveling on snowshoes over Lake Minnewanka ice which was three feet thick at that time, there was no snow in several places on the lake. Crossin' them places, I could hear a tremendous thump on the ice—which made me curious. Lookin' through the ice I see several large fish bumping their noses on the bottom of the ice. I was wearin' long German stockin's with red tassels on them. Then I realized the fish was takin' them for bait."

10. Mixed Weather

Told by Mrs. B. S.

He told me he was skating down the Bow, and he was chased by a pack of wolves. He took off his cap and threw it back, and the wolves stopped and fought over that. Then they gained on him, and he threw his scarf—and he kept on throwing things till he hadn't anything he could get along without. And finally the wolves were gaining on him, and he thought that his end had come. Just then he turned a

bend in the river—and there was a man there hoeing potatoes. And he came out with his hoe and killed one of the wolves, and he escaped.

—This man hoeing potatoes while he was skating![11]

11. The Indians and the Chinook

Told by Mrs. B. S.

I never heard Dave tell this but they tell it. Dave said there was an Indian and his wife driving in from Morley—and a chinook was chasing them. And when they arrived in Calgary, the Indian had had a sunstroke, but his wife, sitting in the back, was frozen.[12]

12. Left Hanging

Told by Mrs. B. S.

The one Mrs. McDougall backed him in.

They were driving up to Edmonton, and there was very, very deep snow. They had to camp north of Calgary for the night. They were driving up from Morley. They tied the horses to some evergreens there, and pitched their tent. Through the night a chinook struck them. In the morning they couldn't find their horses. Then they heard a funny noise in the trees, and they looked up, and the horses were hanging in the trees—the snow had all melted. That's what a chinook will do.[13]

13a. Outracing the Chinook

Told by Alex R. McTavish

Dave McDougall lived at Morley, which is about fifty miles west of Calgary, on the Bow River. He started to town with a team and bobsleigh. He was traveling east. A foot of snow was on the ground when he left his home. On the road he was overtaken by a chinook. (Chinooks always come from the west). It was a particularly warm chinook, and, fearing that he wouldn't get to town before the snow melted, he whipped up the horses to a gallop. The snow melted so fast that the front runners were on snow but the back runners were in the mud. Try as he might he could not go fast enough to get the back runners out of the mud and up on to the snow.[14]

—It is doubtful if he ever did tell it. They just hung it on him.

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[11] For another story of two seasons existing at the same time, see: Halpert, *op. cit.*, p. 104. Others from Pennsylvania and New York are in the Halpert MSS.

[12] Compare this with the changeable weather which kills one ox by sunstroke and freezes the other to death: M. C. Boatright, *Tall Tales from Texas* (Dallas, Texas, 1934), p. 75; R. S. Boggs, "North Carolina White Folk Tales and Riddles," *Journal of American Folklore*, XLVII (1934), 316.

[13] This is a variant of the Munchausen tale. See, *The Travels of Baron Munchausen*, edited by W. Rose, Broadway Translations (London and New York, n.d.), p. 31; C. Neely and J. W. Spargo, *Tales and Songs of Southern Illinois* (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1938), p. 47; R. M. Dorson "Jonathan Draws the Long Bow," *New England Quarterly*, XVI (1943) 275. In Paul Bunyan's camp a skid sled gets left in the treetops when the snow melts, E. Shephard, *Paul Bunyan* (New York, 1924), pp. 104–107. In another American version of this tale the horse is tethered to a tree on top of a sand dune and the wind blows the sand away: Dorson *op. cit.*, p. 275, note 34; A. Garland, "Pipeline Days and Paul Bunyan," *Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society*, VII (1928), 61; Boatright, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–43. Compare the horse tied to a limb that had been bent down by the weight of wild pigeons, Botkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 588–589 (quoted from "Skitt," *Fisher's River Scenes and Characters*).

[14] This, the best known of Dave's yarns, is a variation on the Munchausen story of the horse and rider outracing a storm. For a text and references see: Halpert, *op. cit.*, p. 104, P. Moulton, *2500 Jokes for All Occasions* (New York, 1942), No. 1234. A very modern variant, mentioning a "Model T," is in E. E. Selby, *100 Goofy Lies* (Decatur, Illinois, 1939), p. 15.

13B. Outracing the Chinook

Told by Dr. B. J. Charles

This Dave McDougall he was driving to town—Morley, west of Calgary—halfway between here and Banff.

This Dave started to town with a bobsled and team. The chinook came up and the temperature started to rise so fast. And he whipped up the team and tried to beat the chinook into Cochrane. And the last two miles the front sled was in the snow and the back sled was digging in the mud.

—I might tell you he has the reputation of being just the damndest liar they ever heard.

14. Paul Bunyan

Told by M. B. Graham

When Paul Bunyan built the Rocky Mountains,[15] it was the winter of the blue snow when the geese flew backwards. He hauled the rock from Winnipeg with a big blue ox. He had a steam shovel; every time it took a scoop, it gouged out a hole the size of Lake Louise.

They made flapjacks on a large griddle. The griddle was so large that the KP, he'd have to skate up and down the griddle with greased feet—butter his feet—to get it greased.

He had an engine that was so large that every time the wheels made one revolution, it was payday.

—I heard 'em from different fellows around here. That was quite a few years ago—twenty years ago, I guess. I've heard 'em told in southern Alberta—Calgary. It's broken up in many pieces. I've heard just snatches. I just put it together. That railroad train I heard separately. I just worked it in.[16]

15. Large Engine

Told by M. B. Graham

While workin' for the CPR—they have the largest engines operating, that is, in the mountains through this sector, the Great Divide. I was tellin' him about the large engines we had on the CPR. He says, "That's nothin'! I worked for the Jerusalem Central. We had an engine so large that every time the wheels made one revolution, it was pay day—thirty days."[17]

16. Frozen Hot Springs

Told by Andrew Wright

A tourist inquiring how cold the winter was in Banff, we told him it was so cold last winter that the ice froze in the Upper Hot Springs Swimming Pool. One boy's feet went through the ice, and he got his foot scalded.[18]

—Oh, we've lots of stories like that.

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[15] Cf. Garland, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[16] See the following story.

[17] For another yarn telling of the gigantic size of the engines on the "Jerusalem Center Railroad," see Burlington Liars Club, *The 25 Best Lies of 1933* (Burlington, Wisconsin, 1934), p. 11.

[18] This should be compared with the stories of boiling liquid freezing.

17. Green

Told by Andrew Wright

A tourist inquired from a local guide how come the water at Lake Louise was so green.[19] He replied, "A tourist fell in last summer."

18. How to Cook a Marmot

Told by Andrew Wright

A tourist went out on a pack trip for a month. After he'd been on the trail two weeks he thought he knew all about the game. Next time he thought he'd go on the trip himself and save money. One day going over a summit, he saw a large marmot.—It's one of the last animals in the mountains that you'd care to eat; they're so greasy.—He inquired from the cook if he was hungry how he should cook one. The cook said: "Well, you have to kill it first. Then pack it along till you come to a nice cold spring. Put it in a large pot; then boil it for two hours, then strain the water off and refill the pot with cold water. Then boil it again for another two hours. When it's well done, catch it by the hind leg, throw it in the bush, and cut yourself some bacon."[20]

19. Killed by a Bear

Told by Andrew Wright

When I was a ranger in Rocky Mountain Park in Banff, I was transferred to a new district. There was a stream of water coming out of a pass in the mountains that I was very interested in knowin' where it came from. I decided one day to travel to the top of the pass. I'd taken along lunch and my fishing tackle with me. On arriving at the top of this pass I saw a beautiful stream down in the valley below with a bunch of poplar trees growing near the river. I then decided on going down to try fishing in the stream.

While walkin' through the poplar trees near the river, I heard a noise to one side of me. Then I noticed a grizzly bear makin' for me. I then climbed up the first tree that I come to. The bear walks round the tree and growled. He then stood on his hind legs and tried to shake me off the tree. When that didn't work, he growled and left.

Thinkin' he had gone for good, ten minutes later I climbed down the tree, when to my surprise I see him walkin' on his hind legs towards me with a beaver in each arm. I then climbed up the tree again. When he got to the base of the tree, he put the beaver down, then growled at them. Then the beaver really went to work. My how them chips did fly out of that tree! Then I realized the situation was bad. Presently the tree swayed and down I come along with the tree.

Then someone in the party asked me, "What happened?"—You hesitate there till that question's asked—

The bear eat me up![21]

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[19] Lake Louise is noted for its amazingly beautiful blue-green color.

[20] Cf. "How to Make Rattlesnake Soup," Botkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 379–381; recipe for planking carp, J. W. Blakley, *Tall Tales* (Franklin, Ohio and Denver, Colo., 1936), p. 58.

[21] See: R. M. Dorson, "Just B'ars," *Appalachia*, n.s. VIII, 183; Boatright, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–67; H. W. Thompson, *Body, Boots and Britches* (Philadelphia, 1940), p. 291. There is a text from Pennsylvania in the Halpert MSS. Compare: O. C. Hulett, *Now I'll Tell One* (Chicago, 1935), pp. 90–91, where wolves set beaver to cutting down a tree.

20A. Taking No Chances

Told by Miss Dorothy Hawley

A young English chap was employed at a ranch near High River and from High River the mountains can be seen very clearly—the Rockies—same ones you saw. Well, these mountains fascinated him so that one day he announced to the rest of the cowboys that: "I'm going to take a little jaunt over this afternoon to see those mountains." So off he started on horseback. Two weeks later he returned from his jaunt very travelworn and hungry. A few days later he and the other cowhands were out wrangling. They came to a tiny little stream. The English chap was in the lead—his horse was in the lead—and to the surprise of the other cowboys he dismounted, took off his shoes and socks, rolled up his trousers, and began to wade across. They said, "What are you wading across for? Your horse can easily leap that!" "I'm taking no more chances, distances in these parts are so deceiving!"[22]

—Somebody told it to me around Calgary.

20B. Taking No Chances

Told by Dr. B. J. Charles

This Englishman was here visiting a cousin of his, and in the morning he got up and he thought he'd like to walk from Calgary to the Rocky Mountains—they looked so close. (They're about eighty miles away.) He started at 9 o'clock and landed home at 5 o'clock very much played out. When he told his cousin what he had done, his cousin told him: "You must never do that again because you can't judge distance here—the air is so rare."

Then next day they were going for a little walk together and they came to a little stream. The native Calgarian was going to step over it, but the visiting cousin took a look at it and started to take off his clothes. On being asked what he was doing, he said, "I'm not going to take a chance on stepping over. It may be a lot wider than it looks due to the rarified air."

20C. Taking No Chances

The manuscript of this story which I reprint *verbatim et literatim* was given me by S/Sgt Jasper Oddo, USAAF, Calgary, Alberta, who told me: "Some Canadian from town gave it to me—wrote it. It's supposed to be true."

A Short Story of a Misjudged Limey

An Englishman arrived in Calgary. He registered at the Palliser Hotel. He was given a room on the top floor. As he was looking out the window he noticed the Rockies. Not judging the distance, he figured he would take a walk the next morning and visit them before breakfast. So came morning. He started out. About noon a passing ranger was nearing a creek when he noticed this Englishman taking off his clothes and about to swim across the creek. The ranger asked him why he was going to swim across the creek when he could walk across; it was only one foot deep. But the Englishman said: I can see it's not deep but I don't believe it. I started to walk to the mountains this morning and I'm not there yet, so I'm not taking any chances."

[22] The Englishman's remarks are given with an exaggerated imitation of an English accent. For another story of the remarkable clarity of Western atmosphere, compare: F. H. Hart, *The Sazerac Lying Club* (San Francisco and New York, 1878), pp. 95–97.

21. The Bear and the Chinook

Told by Mr. T. J. Taylor, aged seventy-eight

A man was walking down to Galgary from Banff. And a bear took after him. And a chinook wind started to blow. The man made it all right. The man kept ahead of him—he was on snowshoes—and the bear couldn't travel because the snow was melting so quick he was traveling on water.[23]

22a. Strong Wind

Told by Mrs. B. S.

Storm blew a man up against the post office at Macleod and he was there for two days—couldn't get away.

22b. Strong Wind

Told by Alex R. McTavish

The wind at Macleod—it blows all the time. The wind blew so strong that it blew a cow up against the barn. She starved to death before she got down.[24]

23. Wind in a Hole

Told by Alex R. McTavish

Well, this fellow was walking in the mountains and he heard a noise—a peculiar noise of terrific wind—and he went to investigate. He discovered a large hole in the ground about ten feet across, and this wind was coming out of this hole. And while he stood there watching, a full grown buffalo blew right out of this hole. Then he lost his nerve, you see, and he wouldn't go back to the same place again.

—I don't know just where I heard it. It came from the same source as all the other stories.

24. Dry Spell

Told by M. B. Graham

During the dry spell in southeastern Alberta I had occasion to call on one of the old homesteaders. At the time I was driving a "Model T." There was a scarcity of water in the district. The car boiled, and I asked the homesteader for a little water. And he said they paid six bits a barrel for water—pretty hard to spare; but although it was pretty hot—no shade—I could stick around and cool off. It was only 108°, no trees, just bald-headed prairie. He says first to me, he says, "What are you doing?" I told him I was writing life insurance. "Well," he says, "You'll do no business around here. We've been dried out so bad." He says, "You see that old dog over there? The sun dried him up so bad he couldn't walk. I had to put him in the wheelbarrow in order to wheel him around to bark at the cows. That's all they saved was the bark."

He said he had eleven seven-year-old bullfrogs that couldn't swim a stroke. He

[23] Compare this with "Outracing the Chinook," story 13.

[24] Cf. Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration, *Idaho Lore* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1939), p. 120; V. Randolph, *Funny Stories about Hillbillies* (Girard, Kansas, 1944). p. 8. A variant from Alaska is in the Halpert MSS. For other stories about the wind, compare Botkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 512–520, 611–613; Boatright, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–48.

said he had a bunch of old sows up in the pasture. "When I penned them for the winter, I had to soak 'em four days in the irrigation ditch before they'd hold slop."[25]

He says, "You see those sparrows up on the telephone wires shootin' dust?"

—I came here in 1919. It's only fun; they're all from the district.

25. Why They Hop

Told by Alex R. McTavish

There's a real lead in stories about the dry years in this country—in the early '80's There's been many stories told about them. It didn't rain for so long that the ground began to crack. And these were not ordinary cracks, but they kept getting wider until the whole country was just a network of cracks leaving little islands with large crevices between. It's said that the rabbits used to walk like ordinary animals, but in order to get from one island to another they had to hop and therefore acquired the habit of hopping. Some people say that that's where the grasshopper learned to hop—from jumping from one island to another. Prairie animals such as the antelope became very expert at it. In fact everything that traveled had to hop. Even the old-timers, who were very few in those days, did their share of hopping. Naturally they acquired a hopping gait too, but this gait did not stay with them after normal weather conditions sealed up the cracks. But there are some of the real old-timers from the prairie region that still have a suspicious loping gait.

26. Muddy Road

Told by Mrs. B. S.

They used to call Toronto—"Muddy York." Seems a man sank in this mud. Some friends tried to pull him out, and he said, "Well, wait until I take my feet out of the stirrups." His horse was gone altogether.[26]

—That's an old story down there; I heard it when I was a girl.

27. Hot Weather

Told by Mrs. B. S.

This was in Chicago. It was a hot day—they went down to the lake shore. One man said he'd never experienced heat like this. This old Southerner said this wasn't hot at all. That down South where he came from he saw a dog chasing a cat—and they were both walking![27]

[25] For frogs several years old that can't swim, cf. Burlington Liars Club, *op. cit.*, p. [5]; Botkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 313, 338, 339; Mildred Meiers and Jack Knapp, *Thesaurus of Humor* (New York, 1940), No. 5565; Randolph, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10. For shrinking hogs in water so they won't leak when fed swill, cf. Hulett, *op. cit.*, p. 22. For other dry land stories, cf. Hulett, *op. cit.*, pp. 22, 100, 103; Botkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 312–314, 332–340; Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 218–219.

[26] In the usual form of this widely known story, a man picks up a hat on a muddy road only to find a man sunk under it riding safely on a horse or mule or vehicle. He is on horseback in: Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 173–174; Boatright, *op. cit.*, p. 48; E. C. Beck, *Songs of the Michigan Lumberjacks* (Ann Arbor, 1942), p. 282; Moulton, *op. cit.*, No. 1221; on a mule in: M. J. Atkinson and J. F. Dobie, "Pioneer Folk Tales," *Publications of the Texas Folklore Society*, VII (1928), 75–76; A. P. Hudson and P. K. McCarter, "The Bell Witch of Tennessee and Mississippi: A Folk Legend," *Journal of American Folklore* XLVII (1934) 56–57 (reprinted in Botkin, *op. cit.*, p. 706); on a load of hay in L. Thomas, *Tall Stories* (New York, 1931), pp. 210–213; Selby, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Dreamy Bill and Others, *The Arkansaw I Saw* (Baltimore, Md., 1919), p. 50; and, most up-to-date, on a jeep: Sgt. Bill Davidson, *Tall Tales They Tell in the Services* (New York, 1943), p. 47.

[27] See Moulton, *op. cit.*, No. 1254. Cf. Hulett, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–13, and Botkin, *op. cit.*, p. 338, where it is told of a coyote chasing a jackrabbit, and Randolph, *op. cit.*, p. 7 (fox chasing a weasel). For other hot weather stories see: Z. N. Hurston, *Mules* and *Man* (Philadelphia and London, 1935), pp. 132–133 (also reprinted in Botkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 606–607); Botkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 312, 339–341.

28. Sounds Freezing

Told by Derek Chapman, aged twenty-two

(I read Ruttle's story, No. 34, to Derek at the riding stable shortly after Mr. Ruttle, the proprietor had gone out. Then Derek said, "That's like the old one everyone knows.")

A farmer one cold morning in winter went to his back door to holler for his pigs. It was so cold out that as he yelled his words froze in the air. His pigs didn't come home until his words thawed out in the spring—then the pigs heard it.[28]

29. Frozen Words

Told by Charles K. Underwood

The foreman came out to give orders on the ranch—it was at the old Bar-U. It was 75 degrees below zero. It was so cold, d'you see, that the words froze in his mouth—and so he broke them off and handed them around so the men could get their orders for the day.[29]

—One of old George Lane's stories about the old Bar-U, at Patisco, west of Calgary. There are several good stories they tell about these old times.

30. Frozen in Print

Told by George Ruttle

We used to have it pretty cold in Manitoba. We'd holler at the horses, and the breath would freeze and their name would be printed across their rump.

31. Part Boiling, Part Frozen

Told by George Ruttle

We often used to be boiling vegetables, and it would be so cold the side next to the door would be all frozen over, the other side would be boiling.[30]

32. Frozen on Hot Furnace

Told by Mrs. B. S.

About the cold in Edmonton? We were visiting at the home of one of the leading citizens who declared he froze his case of beer sitting on top of the hot furnace—the furnace was going. But a lady here beat this one—she said it was so cold in her house that she froze her tongue in bed.

—Calgary people love to get a joke on Edmonton.

33. Frozen Wood

Told by Alex R. McTavish

This fellow started from Calgary to go to Edmonton. It was a very, very cold spell—in fact the coldest spell they'd ever seen in the country. When he was on his way for a couple of hours he had to build a fire, and he couldn't see anything but

[28] For sounds freezing in the air and not heard till spring see: Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 132, 138, 272; Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–198, 199; Hulett, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Boatright, *op. cit.*, pp. 50–51; Shephard, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–101; texts from Alaska in Halpert mss. The theme is one of Munchausen's and is also in one of Joseph Addison's essays in *The Tatler*. Compare the following yarn for a variant form.

[29] For sounds freezing into chunks of ice, see: Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 198, 199–201; Moulton, No. 1223; D. Lavender, *One Man's West* (New York, 1943), p. 16.

[30] For coffee boiling with ice on top, see Botkin, *op. cit.*, p. 508; Blakley, *op. cit.*, p. 49; Randolph, *op. cit.*, p. 17. A text from New Jersey is in the Halpert MSS.

green willows. To his amazement the willows were frozen so hard that they broke up and burned just like match wood.

—I don't know where I heard it.

34. Split Dog; Great Bird

Told by George Ruttle

—Heard it in Ontario, I guess, Kent County—western Ontario. Oh, about fifty years. I'm pretty near seventy. That was old Tommy Robinson's story.

He said he went out deer hunting one day and his dog started up a deer and the dog took after it; and before it went far, it ran against a sapling tree and split in two. He said he picked the dog up and slapped it together and, watching the deer at the same time, he got two legs up and two legs down. He said when the dog started after the deer, when he got tired of running on the two legs he'd flip over and run on the other two.[31]

But he couldn't catch the deer, and he'd followed him so long he got lost in the woods. He was three days without anything to eat he said, and the only thing he saw was a humming bird he said. Took a shot at it with his rifle—put a hole through it he could put his two fists through—knocked over a bushel of feathers out of it.

35. Riding a Fish

Told by Charles K. Underwood

Miss Lou Neilson—she's a woman about fifty-five; she lives in Salt Lake City, Utah, now. She used to keep the picture show and hotels in Cardston. She was a great fisherman—one of the best fishermen in Alberta. She came home one time soaking wet at Waterton Lakes—that's the Peace Park—with no canoe. So a friend said, "Lou, where's your canoe? What happened?" "I lost the biggest fish I ever caught in my life. It weighed at least a hundred pounds. I was about three hundred yards from shore when I got this bite on my trolling line. As the huge fish neared the surface, it suddenly flipped its tail upsetting the canoe, throwing me into the water. Luckily I held on to the trolling line, and when the fish rose again I slipped the line through his mouth, and straddling the huge monster rode him back to shore." Lou was then asked by the bystander why she hadn't brought the fish home. She replied, "Would you have killed the fish that saved your life?"[32]

—It's a tradition up at Waterton; it's a good story.

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[31] For the split, or chopped dog, see: Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 295; Shephard, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–116; H. Zunser, "A New Mexican Village," *Journal of American Folklore*, XLVIII (1935), 173; H. Halpert, "Family Tales of a Kentuckian," *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, I (1942), 71; S. Gates, "Windy Yesterdays," *Publications of the Texas Folklore Society*, XIV (1938), 264–265; R. S. Boggs, "North Carolina Folktales Current in the 1820's," *Journal of American Folklore*, XLVII (1934), 276–277 (reprinted from Skitt, *op. cit.*), also reprinted in Botkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 593–594. For other split animals, see Dorson, *op. cit.*, *New England Quarterly*, XVI, 246; H. Halpert, "Folktales Collected in the Army," *California Folklore Quarterly*, III (1944), 118.

[32] See *Idaho Lore*, *op. cit.*, pp. 127–129. Compare riding a shark, Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of New Jersey, *New Jersey, A Guide To Its Present and Past* (New York, 1939), p. 129. See the latter for a comparable story of being towed by a fish, p. 129. Cf. also: Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 57–61, 75–76.

36. Fish on Dry Land

Told by Andrew Wright

Jerry Brown told this at a place called Bankhead, a coal mining place close to Banff. Well, he said he went through a farmer's field to go fishing on this river. He said, "You talk about catching big fish."—We'd been talking about fish stories; he'd go one better.—He said, "My tackle was the finest money could buy. I'd only been fishin' a few minutes when I hooked on to a big one." He said, "I battled with it for two hours." He said, "When I finally got it out on the shore, while I was admiring it, it revived and chased me across the plowed field." He said, "That was my last fishing trip."

37. Convivial Snake

Told by Alex R. McTavish

A man was fishing and he noticed, swimming in front of him, a little water snake with a frog in his mouth. The bright idea came to him that he could use the frog as bait, so he caught the snake and took the frog away. He felt so sorry about depriving the snake of his meal that he took out his liquor flask and dropped a few drops in the snake's mouth before he let him go. Well, he went on fishing and used the frog successfully, and he didn't notice the snake coming back until it was knocking against his leg. And he looked down and there was the snake—with another frog.[33]

—I think that's kind of a modern story.

38a. Mosquitoes and Pot

Told by Mrs. B. S.

This is just a story some minister told me about how bad the mosquitoes were one place. He had this pot hanging outside someplace and he heard a "click, click" and there were mosquitoes hammering on the pot. Their bill went right through, so he clinched them on the other side, you see?—thought he had them. But they just flew away with the pot.[34]

He was a Scotchman; I don't know where he heard it.—Of course ministers are great fellows for yarns.

38b. Mosquitoes and Kettle

Told by George Ruttle

In the spring when the season was on for the mosquitoes in North Dakota, one man would have to get under the big kettle every night—kettle for boiling water for scalding hogs. Then when the big buck mosquitoes would put their nibs in to get you, you'd clinch it on the other side of the cast iron kettle—underneath.

[33] For texts and references see H. Halpert, "Indiana Folktales," *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin* I (1942), 17–18, and A. L. Gary, "Some Indiana Yarns," *ibid.* II (1943), 45–56. Add: Blakley, *op. cit.*, p. 55; Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 35. Cf. Federal Writers' Project in Indiana, *Hoosier Tall Stories* (Works Progress Administration, 1937), pp. 23–24.

[34] For a text and references, see H. Halpert, "John Darling, A New York Munchausen," *op. cit.*, pp. 103–104. Add: C. F. Arrowood, " 'Well Done, Liar,' " *Publications of the Texas Folklore Society*, XVII (1943), 80; Lavender, *op. cit.*, p. 150; Sgt. Bill Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

39. Mosquitoes on Snowshoes

Told by Art Ross

That's just a saying around here—that mosquitoes around Calgary hang around so late in the fall and they're so big, they run around with snowshoes on.

40. Mosquitoes for Horses

Told by James Vert, of Granum, Alberta

Down at Namaka, Alberta, the mosquitoes were so big down there they used to hitch 'em up and plow with 'em.—I was down there that time. It was easy to harness them.

41. Strong Team

Told by Alex R. McTavish

Every part of the country has its strong team that it brags about, but in our country (Alberta) we *had* a strong team. It got stuck in a mud hole with a loaded wagon. The driver knew that there wasn't much to fear because he had all kinds of faith in his team, so he laid on the bud [the whip] and started to cuss. The outfit started to move all right, but when he looked down he was amazed to see that he was dragging the whole mud hole along with him.[35]

42. Long Team

Told by M. B. Graham

An old friend of mine, Slim Morehouse, hauled wheat from his farm to Vulcan, Alberta, with thirty-six horses on one hitch. This hitch was entered on several occasions in the Calgary Stampede—in the parade. Slim and I and a few of the boys were having refreshments. A fellow, after hearing of Slim's prowess, says, "Aw, that's nothing. I come from Texas. I drove a string of mules so long that the wheelers—the wheel team—were up to their knees in manure."

43. The Tasks

Told by Andrew Wright

While sittin' in the beer parlor one evenin' the bartender was drinkin' in our company but was never known to buy a drink. He asked me to tell a story. I told this story:

A man died one time and went to the Pearly Gates. He was met by St. Peter to whom he told he'd led a clean life on earth and wished to enter Heaven. St. Peter said, "No, I'm goin' to give you several tests. The first one is, take this dipper and go down to earth and drain the Great Lakes dry."

After 20,000 years he returned and told St. Peter the lakes were dry as a bone and he wished to enter. St. Peter said, "No, I've another test for you." And he gave him a pick and shovel and told him to go down to earth and level off the Rocky Mountains.

After 20,000 years he returned and wished to be admitted into Heaven. St. Peter said, "I've one more test for you," and asked me[36] if I'd ever been in Banff. I said, "Yes." He also asked me if I'd ever been in the King Edward Beer Parlor. I answered,

[35] For another team which drags out a hole, cf. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

[36] Note the change from third to first person.

"Yes." He then told me to go down and sit in the beer parlor till the bartender bought me a drink, and he'd let me into Heaven.

—He bought us a drink right away.[37]

44. Mean Farmer

Told by Andrew Wright

Percy Williams, he's a painter in Banff, he said: "Never work for an Ontario farmer." He said: "I did one time. First morning he got me up at three o'clock. Told me it was gettin' late. Better have a light breakfast and go to work. He gave me a glass of water and a lantern. Along about 11 o'clock we were plowin' in the fields. He tried to encourage me by sayin' we would have a hot lunch—which turned out to be mustard sandwiches. So that one day's experience with an Ontario farmer was enough for me."

45. Moose Hunt

Told by Bert Allen, aged twenty-one

(Bert had been listening to the stories Derek was telling me and at first tried to interest me in a couple of rather dull, dirty yarns. Finally he caught the hang of the kind of story I was interested in, and related the following):

A Scotchman just come out from Scotland—he was a neighbor to this Englishmen. And he wanted to go hunting so the Englishman said he'd take him moose hunting. So the Scotchman thought that was all right. When they got out there, the Scotchman got a look at the moose, and when he saw it, he exclaimed: "If thot's a moose, what do yer rats look like?"

—My brother told that. It was an old yarn he heard Down East. It was told by an Englishman fighting with a Scotchman.

46. Going Some

Told by Miss Barbara Smart of Grande Prairie, Alberta

It's like the story told about the man caught in the tornado whose house was lifted right up and set down again. The local parson came and said, "My man, you are very fortunate, the Lord must have been with you." To which the man replied, "Well, sir, if He was, He was sure going some."[38]

—This is one of my Dad's favorite yarns.

47. No, We Haven't

Told by Andrew Wright

This is about Pat and Mike on a deer hunt. While going up a ravine in search of game, Pat, who was in the lead, figured he was the boss of the hunting party. Mike noticed two ears of an animal on the skyline ahead of them. He drew Pat's attention to this. He said to Pat, "There's a deer." Pat informed Mike that he was going to do all the shooting, that Mike had nothing to do with it. Pat, taking careful aim, shot at the part of the head that was showing—it disappeared after he shot it. Mike said, "Pat, we've shot a deer." Pat bawled him out and said, "Mike, you've got nothing to do with this; *I* shot the deer." On arriving at the spot, Pat found he'd

[37] Almost exactly the same story from New York State is in the Halpert MSS.

[38] Cf. Botkin, *op. cit.*, p. 710.

shot a mule. He turned to Mike and said, in a very meek way, "We've shot a mule." Mike said, "No, *we* haven't; *you've* shot a mule."

—They used to tell a lot of stories about Pat and Mike, but they've sort of died out.[39]

48. Obstinate Wife

Told by Charles K. Underwood

A man was living with his wife and she was a terrible gossip: talk, talk, talk. And so he got sick of this—and one day they were walking alongside the river and she was constantly talking, and he said if she didn't stop he'd throw her in the river. They started another argument about the color of a horse: whether it was white or black. She said it was white and he said it was black. He said she was wrong; she said she was right. He said, "Wrong!" She said, "Right!" So he picked her up and threw her in the river.

She was drowning and hollered for help. He says, "If you'll admit that I'm right, I'll pull you out!" She said, "No! I'm right," and sunk for the first time. Going down for the second time she still said she was right. Third time the water'd gotten into her mouth and she couldn't speak, d'you see? And he said, "It's your last chance to be saved, old lady, am I right or wrong? If you're right make the sign of a pair of scissors." [Gesture of scissors with forefinger and middle finger.] And as she was going down, the last thing he could see was her hand makin' the sign of a pair of scissors.[40]

—I heard it in 1898, in Yarmouth, Norfolkshire, England. It used to be a keen delight of mine to hear these old yarns. That's an old story.

49. One for You

Told by Derek Chapman

There were two young boys in the graveyard. They were counting their marbles squatting on the ground in their usual style. One boy holding all the marbles was counting 'em out to the other fellow. And this is the way it went: "Now there's one for you and one for me," and he kept on saying, "One for you and one for me"—kept on saying it two, three times until accidentally one of the marbles dropped over the fence. So his line went this way then: "One for you and one for me, and the one over the fence is yours."

Now this continued until a farmer passing by happened to hear them saying this. He got out of his car and put his ear to the fence, and he listened, and this is what he heard in a very strange way: "One for you and one for me, and the one over the fence is yours." In very much excitement he quickly got into his tin lizzie and went straight to the preacher's house. In very much excitement he tells the preacher to come quick: "There's Satan and Jesus counting the people. Now he says, 'One for you and one for me and the one over the fence is yours.' I don't know who I belong to, but I'm mighty scared!"

—That's the only clean joke I know. It's my own original joke. I never heard it; I made it up myself. One time, I was passing by the graveyard with two or three

[39] Cf. Randolph, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[40] For texts and references, see H. Halpert, "Folktale and Wellerism—a Note," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, VII (1943), 75–76. Add: C. E. Brown, "Wisconsin Versions of 'Scissors!' " *Hoosier Folklore Bulletin*, II (1943), 46–47.

other fellows and we actually saw two young boys counting their marbles in the shrubs surrounding the cemetery. In kidding one of the boys, we told him that we could hear Satan and Jesus in the graveyard and we made up—you know. Can't say as I have heard anything like it. Lots of people know it though, because we published it in the paper: *The Calgary Herald*—where they have that column of jokes "Prairie Wool." That was a long time ago—two years ago. It's a good clean joke that can be told anywhere. You won't hear that one anywhere else because us three fellows put it together ourselves.[41]

[41] For a text and reference see, H. Halpert, "Three Tales from Gwent," *Journal of American Folklore* (in press). Note how sincerely the informant believes that this old folk tale is a story he helped compose.

Soda Fountain Lingo

ENSIGN JOHN LANCASTER RIORDAN

A TYPICALLY AMERICAN phenomenon is the specialized vocabulary employed by waiters and waitresses at soda fountains to relay the customers' orders to the fountain dispenser and cook. That these eating establishments are an integral part of American life cannot be gainsaid. The linguistic and folkloristic aspects of the personnel's activities present an interesting subject for our examination. Often approaching slang, this lingo demonstrates the old adage that brevity is the soul of wit. Picturesque and humorous terms used frequently indicate both the thought that has gone into the formation of the expressions and the love of the workers for their occupation. Allusions to social and even historical facts are not uncommon.

A thorough study of the soda fountain terminology found in various parts of California, other Pacific Coast states, or even all of the United States, would prove valuable and enlightening. This article must, however, for lack of time be confined to Berkeley and the San Francisco Bay area,[1] Fresno,[2] and by way of comparison, the college town of Boulder, Colorado.[3]

Good fountain dispensers are proud of the high degree of skill demanded by their honorable calling. Commonly referred to as "jerks" or "soda jerks," they prefer to be known as "fountain chemists." A Winslow, Arizona, establishment even displays the certification: "Our Soda Jerks Are Licensed Fizzicians." Waiters and waitresses are commonly known as "hashers," and the fry cook is a "greaseburner." Even the lowly dishwasher enjoys a sobriquet; he is the "pearl diver."

The most commonly ordered items at soda fountains are sodas, "cokes" (Coca-Colas), malted milks, and sundaes, all in various flavors; hamburgers; hot dogs; eggs; toast; coffee; milk. Terms for the most frequently served orders are brief and not further qualified. Thus, "Draw one!" means "Draw one cup of coffee!" while "Shoot one!" designates a small, plain "coke." Since chocolate is the flavor most often requested in sodas, milk shakes, and sundaes, the waitress indicates these as "One in!"; "Shake!" (or: "One shake!"; "A shake!"); and "One on!" Other flavors must be specified. In a shop where hamburgers are a specialty, the order "One!" or "A pair!" clearly indicates that the cus-

[1] For terms from this region I am indebted especially to Marion Rita de Paar of Berkeley, California.

[2] Fresno expressions were provided by Lee Watson of that city.

[3] Mrs. Alex Green, Jr. of Boulder, Colorado, kindly furnished the soda lingo for that area. Credit is also due Miss Mildred Gerke for her generous assistance.